EDITORIAL COMMENT

Campaign reform

A sad consequence of present political campaign practices is that political offices usually go to the highest bidder, regardless of ability or talent. Campaign costs are scandously high even for a congressional race.

To prevent big money and special interests from buying a president, the Senate has passed a scheme to publicly finance presidential campaigns and has attached it to the tax-cut bill. The plan would allow a taxpayer to check off $1 as a contribution to the presidential campaign.

The only trouble with the plan is that it is shot full of flaws, such as the following:

--A candidate and party might refuse the taxpayer contributions and finance their campaigns entirely with private funds. The result could be a lopsided balance of financial resources between parties and little change from the present system.

--The plan makes no provision for presidential primary campaigns and congressional races, both of which are prone to campaign spending abuses.

--The scheme would divert needed tax dollars from the treasury to finance the campaigns.

President Nixon is correct in his intention to veto the campaign financing plan, even though this means killing the needed tax-cut bill to which it is attached.

If Congress is really interested in campaign reform it should tackle existing campaign abuses before coming up with a public financing plan. However, both parties are fighting vigorously to retain the scandalous system by which special interest groups ignore toothless laws limiting spending and donate huge sums of money to candidates through dummy political committees.

Politicians have not shown a great deal of interest in passing meaningful campaign reform laws. However, the alternative to reform is still greater dominance of American politics by the rich, something America cannot afford.

"Sure! I'm a lousy, rotten, crooked, selfish monster! But, remember. . .I got YOU elected!"

Monetary priorities

Nebraska's restrictive laws against abortion have prompted the introduction of a bill in the ASUN Senate to establish a loan fund to finance out-of-state abortions.

ASUN Sen. Bill Behmer, who introduced the bill, suggested the senate set aside $1,000 from other than student fee monies for abortion loans up to $150 to cover either transportation or medical costs. The proposal calls for the loans to be interest free for six months, after which an interest of 6 per cent would be charged.

The proposal has good motives behind it. Only the very poor are now usually prevented by Nebraska law from having legal abortions because of the high cost of out-of-state abortions.

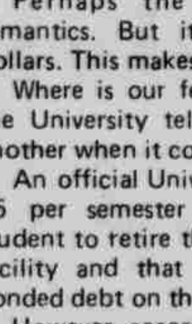
However, the proposal has several drawbacks.

Although the proposal calls for using only non-student fee monies, student government money will still be used for the loan fund. ASUN already has a tight budget and it is doubtful that an abortion loan fund is the best expenditure ASUN could make.

Another drawback to the abortion loan fund is that an UNL student credit union may become a reality by second semester. It doesn't seem practical to have a loan fund for a specific purpose when the campus will probably soon have a student credit union for all types of loans.

It appears that an abortion loan fund will cause more trouble (especially with adverse public reaction) than it's worth. Instead of establishing an abortion loan fund, ASUN should work toward the creation of the student credit union.

Gary Seacrest



bill smitherman

Fee fee Who's got the fee?

In a world of children's games this column might be called "Fee, fee. Who's got the fee?"

Perhaps the question is only one of semantics. But it also concerns millions of dollars. This makes semantics interesting.

Where is our fee money going? Or, why is the University telling us one thing and doing another when it comes to student fees?

An official University breakdown shows that $5 per semester is paid by each full-time student to retire the debt on the student health facility and that $9.50 is paid to retire the bonded debt on the Nebraska Union.

However, according to UNL Comptroller Carl Yost, this money does not go to pay just for these bonds. The identifications have been eliminated, but no one bothered to tell the students.

Now the $14.50 goes to a fund in a Lincoln bank to pay off all the University's bonded debts. These include dormitories and the Nebraska Center.

Yost said the fee designation had not been changed because of administrative neglect. But, could it be that the designation was not changed on purpose?

It is interesting to note that University housing is supposedly self-supporting. It is also probably realized that students might object to paying for dormitories in which they don't live and for a Nebraska Center which is no more accessible to them than to anyone else.

This seems to be an administrative slip with meaning.

Another question arises since the 15-year bonds for the health facility expired Sept. 1 of this year but money is still being collected. Calculations show that enough money should have been collected by 1962 to pay for the bond and interest. What has happened to the money collected since then?

The answer again is that money is not being collected for Student Health. The same will be true with the Union collections which should raise more than five times enough to pay for that addition.

Union Director Al Bennet said he expects the Union to eventually receive the entire $10 million in student fees to be collected during the period of the bond. But, Yost said there is no guarantee of this and it would seem wise to reconsider this optimism in view of the fact that there seems to be little chance that the extra money collected for the Health Center will ever be used on that facility.

It is up to the Administration and the Regents to give a full and true accounting of where student fee money goes in all areas. There is no excuse for the bare lie that money is going to pay for facilities long paid for.